



November 2013

NEWSLETTER FOR THE PAID & VOLUNTEER STAFF OF RAILTOWN 1897 STATE HISTORIC PARK

Upcoming Events

November 5

Ladies Luncheon at
Applebee's
Call Marge @ 533-4595

November 15

Silent Movie Night at
Ironstone Winery
"Railroad Movie Shorts"
209-728-1251 ext.11

November 18, 19, 20

Christmas train decorating
exterior light and interior

November 28

Thanksgiving Day

November 29, 30, Dec 1
Daytime Santa trains

November 29 & 30
Santa's Starlight Express
Trains in the evening

December 3

Railtown Ladies Luncheon
at Applebee's, Sonora
Call Marge @ 533-4595

December 8

Annual volunteer potluck
Christmas party and 'white
elephant' gift exchange
3pm at Senior Center,
Greenley Road, Sonora

December 13

Special Christmas train
to Sonora

December 14 & 15

Daytime Santa trains

December 25

Christmas Day

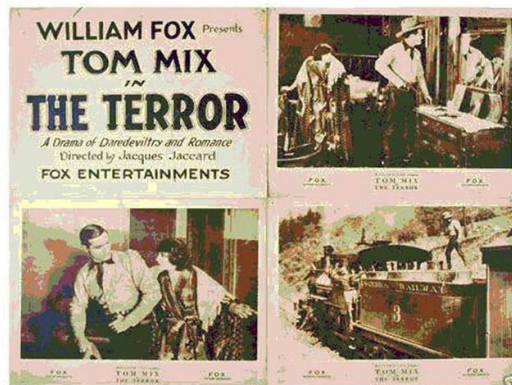
***Note: Depot Store
Winter Hours are
now 10am-3pm
Until April 1, 2014**

The Sierra Railway Earns The Title: "The Movie Railroad"

from Bob Gibson

From 1897 to 1906, the Sierra Railway Company was primarily focused on building a network of track to serve the lumber and mining industries of Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties. During that brief period, tracks were laid to Jamestown and soon extended to the lumber mills at Standard and Tuolumne City, the company's general offices were completed, and the luxurious Hotel Nevils opened. To fill the growing need for lumber, local mills built extensive narrow gauge tracks which snaked through the mountains and fed timber back for processing. From there, the Sierra Railway hauled the lumber to the Central Valley.

This boom period was brought to a sudden halt when the great 1906 earthquake hit the San Francisco Bay Area and the railway's investors withdrew their support. Projects, such as the construction of the Yosemite Short Line came to a halt. Then, in 1910, a series of devastating fires further dampened the struggling railroad. What followed over the years were periods of boom and bust. Luckily, projects like the Hetch Hetchy and Don Pedro dams kept the railway alive, as well as a new and unexpected industry from southern California. It was just before 1920 that Hollywood discovered our great resources. Enticed by the old steam locomotives, rolling stock, and



rugged, pristine scenery of the area, film producers began venturing out of Los Angeles to make movies in Tuolumne County. The silent film *The Red Glove* was the first movie to be filmed in the area and its production marked the beginning of a new county industry. Hollywood soon became an excellent source of revenue for the Sierra Railway and kept it solvent through some very lean times.

There were a dozen or so movies filmed between 1919 and 1940 using steam engines No. 3, No. 30, and No. 18. In 1929, *The Virginian*, starring Gary Cooper, was filmed here. It was the first talking movie to be shot outside of Hollywood. Westerns were popular and over the next 20 years, many were filmed in the county using the Sierra Railway stock and crews which generated a good (continue next page)



(continued from page income for the railroad and much excitement among the locals. After all, stand-ins and extras were needed!

From 1940-1960, there was a surge of film making with an excess of 30 movies filmed. In 1948, our famous "Movie Queen", the No. 3, was returned to service after a 15 year hiatus. The No. 3, an 1891 Rogers built 4-6-0, was the workhorse engine for filming during this period, just as the No. 18 had been the most popular engine during the 1940s. Although financially the railroad was still struggling, the film industry once again kept the railroad afloat.

The year 1956 saw the introduction of TV filming at Railtown when an episode of the *The Lone Ranger* was shot. Soon, other TV shows were being filmed in the county. In 1963, the opening scene of *Petticoat Junction* was filmed at Railtown. In 1964, Robert Conrad's *Wild, Wild West* pilot was shot here. The No.3 starred in many of the over 50 episodes of *Little House on the Prairie* which were filmed from 1975-1982 in Tuolumne County. Between 1960 to 1980, more than 80 movies and TV episodes were filmed utilizing the Sierra Railway. The No. 3 had come into its own as the "Movie Queen," and is very likely the most filmed steam locomotive in American film history; a reputation that it enjoys to this day.



Railtown continued to be utilized by Hollywood during the 1980s and 1990s; a blend of major TV episodes and movie productions such as *Back to the Future III* were filmed on location here. In 2004, David Carradine's Wild West Tech production company filmed a documentary for the History Channel retelling the story of America's first train robbery which was committed by the Reno gang in 1866 in Seymour, Indiana. AFLAC filmed a commercial here in 2006 and Disney studios recorded sounds of a steam engine and a rolling train for insertion into future films.

Film making is one of the interpretive themes at Railtown 1897 State Historic Park and visitors can tour the movie prop area to see a partial film list, movie props such as smoke stacks, location signage, and other interpretive materials. Many of these films and TV episodes are still re-run on television and are also available at our book store or on Netflix. The Tuolumne County Film Commission continues to promote our area as a versatile location for future movies, TV episodes, documentaries, and commercial filming.

Yes, Railtown 1897 has earned the descriptive title of "The Movie Railroad" and the restored No.3, the "Movie Queen," continues to say, "I think I can....I think I can....I think I can....be in more movies!





Remembering Joyce Presley

On October 15 we lost a good friend and dedicated volunteer. I've included the following information taken from the recent obituary in the Union Democrat: *"Those in Joyce's sphere were truly lucky individuals and proud to be a part of her life. Her love, loyalty and commitment to family, friends and community service were always apparent. Joyce was a successful accountant for many years prior to retiring to what she referred to as 'Paradise' in Soulsbyville. Her second career quickly became community service, enjoying many years of volunteer service at Railtown 1897 State Historic Park. Joyce's family heritage influenced her interest in the Rail. Her maternal grandfather, Gromelda (Dave) Whiteside, was retired from the Missouri Pacific Railroad, and participated in the early days of the rail. As a docent at Railtown, she enjoyed working with the visiting school days events, ice cream socials and preparing crafts for the Christmas bazaar. She enjoyed all of her Railtown 'extended family'. She also volunteered for the Sierra Repertory Theater. She served on the Tuolumne Grand Jury in past years. Giving back was a huge part of her life. Not many can claim the recognition that Joyce enjoyed as a blood donor, having donated 40 pints of blood over her lifetime. She was very committed to service."*

A 'Celebration of Life' will be held here at Railtown on Saturday, November 16, from 1:00-3:00pm. Friends are welcome to join with her family in sharing the memories and joys of her life.



Holiday Events Schedule

Here's a handy listing of all our special events over the holidays and where volunteers are needed. Please call in and let me know where you'd like to fit in. It's also useful information for volunteers who need to get those few extra hours in to make their 84 and be invited to the recognition dinner. Karen Kling (209-416-8062) will help coordinate the decorating and un-decorating of cars 597, 14, 12, 2901 and #7 caboose

11/ 1 Christmas decorations put up, starting in the Carriage Room, 9am until ?

11/ 7, 8 More Christmas decorations to put up, meet at 9am until ?

11/ 14 & 15 More Christmas decorations, meet at 9am until ?

11/ 18, 19 & 20 Exterior and interior lighting decoration (David Ethier coordinating) 9am until ?

11/ 21 & 22 Final touches on decorating the cars 9am until ?

11/ 29, 30 & 12/1 Daytime Santa Trains

11/ 29 & 30 Evening Starlight Express trains at 5:30 and 7pm

12/13 Special Sonora Train 5pm to 8pm

12/ 14 & 15 Daytime Santa trains

***Note: We need volunteers to help with the following activities:**

1. Put up our Starlight Express Christmas posters (please call if you can help)
2. Hospitality for the Starlight Express event (Nancy Johnson coordinating) 11/29 & 30, 3pm—6pm
3. Fire Patrol volunteers for Starlight Express trains (carrying fuel for the generators), please contact Carl Rudolph (209-586-9905)
4. Car Hosts & Greeters for all trains and December 13th Sonora event (contact Dave Rainwater, 984-4408)
5. Hot chocolate volunteers needed to shuttle the chocolate and clean the containers for the next day (Janet Montano coordinating, 586-4377)
6. Chocolate set up and service on December 13 for the Sonora event
7. Membership table volunteers, set up and on duty for the Sonora December 13th event
8. Santa's Helpers needed from 5pm to 8pm at the Sonora train event
9. Event tear down and clean up for the Sonora event
10. Elves !! How would you like to hand out candy canes dressed up as a North Pole elf? Could anything be more exciting? Also, you can ask the kids they want from Santa and be the special courier for their gift requests to Santa
11. Un-Decorators! After the last train on December 15th. Come on in on Wednesday, Thursday or Friday December 18th, 19th and 20th at 9am to carefully stow away the decorations for next winter.

Welcome Back Norm Comer!

Capital District Staff- Norm Comer will begin work as a Railroad Restoration Specialist at Railtown on Tuesday, November 12th. Norm started his career with state parks in 2000 as a park aid hired to work on the No. 3 project during its initial disassembly, and returned as an employee of the CSRM Foundation from 2008 to 2010 for the completion of the No. 3. In between, Norm has worked in the steam locomotive restoration field on many different projects and shops, including the UP No. 844, Engine No. 1361 for the Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum, and various projects at Roaring Camp Railroad, Strassburg Railroad, Feather River Rail Society in Portola, CA, Sierra Nevada Logging Museum, Nevada Northern Railway Museum in Ely, and Georgetown Loop Railroad. Norm is looking forward to the challenge of being a generalist and picking up new skills in working on cars, motorcars, diesels and joining the engine crew. Please join me in welcoming Norm.

Kim Baker/ Park Superintendent



Railtown News

Angels Branch History Available

Last Spring Dave Connery gave a talk at the Tuolumne County Historical Society's annual dinner in Sonora. As it turns out, the evening's activities were video taped and that DVD is now available from Rod Garside at 12660 Red Chestnut Lane #61, Sonora, CA 95370 for \$20. The subject of his talk was the Angels Branch of the Sierra and it appears in the second half of the taped evening's proceedings. He also wrote a two part article on the Angels Branch that appeared in the Jan-Mar and Apr-Jun issues of the TCHS CHISPA, available at the Historical Museum in Sonora.

Annual Volunteer Christmas Party

Our annual Volunteer Christmas Party get together (and white elephant gift exchange) is going to be held Sunday, December 8th at 3pm, at the Senior Center on Greenley Road in Sonora. Join us for a fun time and pot luck. Volunteers with last names from A to M are asked to bring appetizers. Those from N to Z are asked to bring a side dish or a dessert. Bring a goofy gift (in the \$10- \$20 range) to exchange.

Ed Ellefsen's Memorial

(*Note from Darryl Bramlette): As many of you know, Ed Ellefsen had been battling cancer (malignant melanoma) since April, 2011. Ed lost this fight on Friday, October 25, 2013. Although he was very strong (and strong-willed!), he was finally ready to go home. During this period, he was fortunate to have been able to continue pursuing most of the passions he enjoyed in life. Some of these included his docent role at the historic Jamestown jail, visits to Railtown in his 1890's costume, cowboy action shooting (SASS) and cowboy fast draw, line dancing lessons, and co-hosting a monthly community dance. We're glad he could continue with these activities.

Volunteer Recognition Dinner Set For A Black Oak Casino Luau!

By unanimous decision volunteers elected to have our annual recognition dinner at the new Black Oak Casino banquet facility. Our theme this year will be festive with the Hotel Casino's Island Luau. Do you have a Hawaiian shirt? Mark your calendar for Saturday, January 18 starting at 5pm. A special room rate is available for anyone interested in staying overnight. Please call if interested in lodging. More details to follow.

How Railtown Got Its Name

Charles Crocker (the current alive one) sold the Sierra RR in 1980 to Silverfoot, Inc, a group of Chicago investors. He held out the Jamestown property and the excursion operation. That property he sold to the State, and gifted the equipment to the State in 1982. The current Charles Crocker is the grandson of William H. Crocker, who with Prince Andre Poniatowski (W. H. Crocker's brother-in-law – their wives were sisters from the Sperry family of Stockton) and Thomas S. Bullock were the founders of the Sierra Railway. W. H. Crocker was a major San Francisco capitalist (how they described themselves), and was head of the Crocker Bank. W. H. Crocker was the youngest son of Charles Crocker of Central Pacific and Southern Pacific fame. Charles Crocker founded Crocker Bank because his son, W. H., wanted to be a banker. Charles initially hired an experienced banker to run the bank and teach W. H. the business.

The Crocker Family finally sold Crocker Bank to Wells Fargo Bank in the 1980s. After the Sierra Railway went into bankruptcy in the Depression, W. H. Crocker put together the Sierra Railroad in 1936, and through it took over and reorganized the Sierra Railway in 1937. Crocker had a controlling interest in the old Sierra Railway before that. In 1971 Crocker and the Sierra RR created Rail Town (2 words) 1897 as a tourist operation. In what became known as the "Carriage Room" in the Freight Shed they had a display of carriages and early autos in the early 1970s – although it did not remain there in the later 1970s. That was how the room got its name. It has nothing to do with pre-1970s operations.

Kyle Wyatt/ Historian II



PO Box 1250
Jamestown, CA 95327
Return Service Requested

TO:



Depot Store- (209) 984-3953
Volunteer Desk- (209) 984-4408
Volunteer Website- <http://railtown.team.parks.ca.gov/volunteers>
Railtown Blog- www.railtown1897.wordpress.com
Newsletter Editor— Dave.Rainwater@parks.ca.gov
Crew Caboose- (209) 984-0352



Railtown Paid and Volunteer Staff Contact Information

(all area codes are 209)

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George Sapp , Railroad Restoration Lead Worker (DSLE)	774-6368	George.Sapp@parks.ca.gov
Lisa DeLacy , State Park Curator I (DER)	984-3119	Lisa.DeLacy@parks.ca.gov
Diana Fisher , Park Aide & Social Media Specialist	984-0352	Diana.Fisher@parks.ca.gov
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Dave Rainwater , Senior Park Aide & Volunteer Coordinator	984-4408	Dave.Rainwater@parks.ca.gov
Carl Rudolph , Fire Patrol Coordinator	586-9905	cakr@sonnet.com
Karen Ethier , Ticket Agent Coordinator	471-7525	kmethier@gmail.com

Newsletter Available in Alternative Format on Request